of Taj Mahal with effect from 1st May, 2002. The external security of Taj Mahal is being looked after by the Uttar Pradesh Police.

(b) and (c) No such report of fire followed by another fire near Taj Mahal has been received by the Archaeological Survey of India.

Promotion of Diverse Culture of the Country

338. SHRI T.T.V. DHINAKARAN:Will the Minister of CULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) the steps taken by Government to promote and preserve the diverse culture of the country;

(b) whether Government would set up 'Culture Parks' in the Metropolitan cities of the country in order to promote the culture; and

(c) what measures are being undertaken to spread the richness of our culture abroad?

THE MINISTER OF CULTURE (SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY): (a) The mandate of this Ministry is to preserve and promote all forms of Art and Culture. The functional spectrum of the Ministry is ranging from generating cultural awareness at the grassroots level to promoting cultural exchanges at an international level. The activities are carried out through the Attached/ Subordinate and Autonomous Institutions and a number of Schemes under the Ministry.

(b) No such proposal is under consideration.

(c) The Ministry of Culture has been actively pursuing the policy of cultural cooperation with many countries by entering into Cultural Agreements and further developing them into Cultural Exchange Programmes.

Historical documents

339. SHRI TARIQ ANWAR: Will the Minister of CULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that historic documents lying in official custodian of the National Archives are not properly preserved;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(c) what steps Government are taking for preservation of these documents?

THE MINISTER OF CULTURE (SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY): (a) No, Sir.

(b) and (c) Does not arise. However, as part of regular preservation programmes, the National Archives of India takes a series of measures including air-cleaning, fumigation, deacidification, repairing, lamination, binding and map mounting etc. The National Archives has also drawn up a long term vision plan to augment/supplement the existing system of preservation/conservation of records.

World Heritage Sites

340. SHRI R.P. GOENKA: Will the Minister of CULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the UNESCO has proposed to classify some of the world heritage sites in India, including Hampi in Karnataka, in the "endangered" category; and

(b) if so, the details thereof, including the specific messages/warnings conveyed by the UN agency and the steps being taken to preserve the integrity, of the archaeological sites by saving them from any physical harm or compromising their unique ambience and scenic surroundings?

THE MINISTER OF CULTURE (SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The World Heritage Committee has placed two World Heritage sites-the Group of Monuments at Hampi and the Manas Wild Life Sanctuary-in the endangered category. As far as the archaeological site of Hampi is concerned, it was put in list of danger in 1999 due to construction of a bridge across the river Tungabhadra in the core zone area of the site. Two UNESCO Missions have visited the site and suggested corrective measures. The important suggestions are:

(a) to construct a road by passing the core zone

(b) to prepare a comprehensive site management plan

(c) to include local communities in the development programmes envisaged at the site etc.

The Government of Karnataka has taken steps to construct the new By-pass road by acquiring requisite land and the work is in progress. School of Planning and Architecture, New Delhi is entrusted with the work of formulating comprehensive site management plan to address